

Message Text

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E.O.11652: GDS
TAGS: SREF, MY
SUBJECT: CANADIAN AND FRENCH BOAT CAMP INTERVIEWS

1. CANADIAN INTERVIEW TEAM ARRIVED IN TRENGGANU, SITE OF PULAU BESAR, LARGEST OF MALAYSIAN BOAT REFUGEE CAMPS, THREE DAYS BEHIND SCHEDULE. VISIT INADVERTENTLY COINCIDED WITH REF:OPS PRESENCE IN TRENGGANU. BEFORE GOING TO CAMP, SENIOR CANADIAN TEAM MEMBER AND REF:OFF DISCUSSED ASPECTS OF CANADIAN PROGRAM REVEALING INSIGHTS INTO CANADIAN ATTITUDE TOWARDS BOAT REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT. IMPRESSIONS RELATED HEREIN.

2. INITIALLY, CANADIAN OFFICER EXPRESSED CONCERN THAT U.S. HAD BEEN "PUSHY" IN ENCOURAGING CANADIANS TO FILL COMMITMENT AS TO NUMBER OF CASES INTERVIEWED AND ACCEPTED. HE KEPT STRESSING QUOTE YOU ARE THE BIG GUYS; WE ARE THE LITTLE GUYS UNQUOTE.

3. CANADIAN NOTED THAT HIS COUNTRY DID NOT SHARE U.S. "MORAL COMMENTMENT" TO VIETNAMESE REFUGEES. HE SAID THAT INDOCHINESE BOAT REFUGEE PROGRAM WAS MERELY A SEGMENT OF HIS OVERALL RESPONSIBILITY AND THAT PROGRAM, AS SUCH, HAD NO PARTICULAR PRIORITY. FURTHERMORE, OFFICER IMPLIED THAT THE BI-MONTHLY QUOTA (35
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CASES) FOR MALAYSIA WAS A LIMIT NOT A REQUIRED GOAL.

4. CANADIAN OFFICER ADMITTED THAT HE HAD LITTLE ORIENTATION AS TO VIETNAMESE CULTURE AND SOCIOLOGY. THIS, HE SAID, WOULD PRESENT HIM WITH PROBLEMS IN DECIDING WHO AMONG REFUGEES WOULD HAVE BEST POSSIBILITIES OF READY RESETTLEABILITY IN CANADA.

5. REF:OPS AND CANADIAN TEAM PARTED COMPANY UPON ARRIVAL AT PULAU BESAR CAMP. CANADIANS BEGAN INTERVIEWS AT ADMIN BUILDING WHILE REF:OPS UTILIZED SMALL COMMUNITY CENTER NEARBY TO RE-INTERVIEW PROBLEM CASES.

6. DURING THE DAY, CANADIANS REQUEST U.S. LANGUAGE OFFICER TO ASSIST WITH FOUR CASES IN WHICH THE CANADIANS WERE INTERESTED, BUT REFUGEES POSITION WAS UNCLEAR. FOLLOWING INTERVIEW AND RECOMMENDATIONS BY REF:OPS, CANADIANS ACCEPTED TWO AND REFUSED TWO REFUGEES, PER REF: OPS RECOMMENDATIONS.

7. AFTER SECOND DAY OF CANADIAN INTERVIEWS, CANADIAN OFFICER SAID THAT HE HAD INTERVIEWED MORE QUALIFIED BOAT REFUGEES THAN EVER BEFORE. HE SAID THAT HE FILLED 70 O/O OF THE BI-MONTHLY CANADIAN COMMITMENT IN JUST TWO DAYS. OFFICER STATED PRESENCE OF U.S. TEAM QUITE HELPFUL AND SUGGESTED WE COORDINATE IN FUTURE TO SPEND TIME TOGETHER AT CAMPS.

8. CANADIAN OFFICER SAID IN PAST ABOUT 30 O/O OF REFUGEES HE ACCEPTED INITIALLY DROPPED OUT OF THE CANADIAN SYSTEM BEFORE ACTUAL RESETTLEMENT. LOSSES WOULD, HE SAID, BE DUE TO SINGAPORE OFFICE REJECTIONS AFTER FINAL CASE REVIEWS AND DUE, AS WELL, TO REFUGEES THEMSELVES OPTING OUT.

9. FRENCH OFFICER-IN-CHARGE OF HIS COUNTRY'S BOAT PROGRAM CALLED TO SAY THAT HE, TOO, HAD INTERVIEWED A GOOD NUMBER OF CONFIDENTIAL

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QUALIFIED APPLICANTS. THOUGH, HE INDICATED THAT FRANCE WOULD ACCEPT 50 OR MORE REFUGEES AS RESULT OF APRIL IN-CAMP INTERVIEWS, SIGNIFICANTLY MORE REFUGEES WOULD HAVE BEEN ACCPETED HAD THEY BEEN TRULY SINCERE IN THEIR DESIRE TO RESETTLE IN FRANCE. COMMENT: IT SEEMS THAT MANY REFUGEES ARE APPLYING TO FRANCE TO SATISFY U.S. REQUIREMENT THAT THEY APPLY TO A THIRD COUNTRY BEFORE WE WILL CONSIDER THEM. FRENCH OFFICER TOOK BOGUS APPLICATIONS IN STRIDE. A FEW PERSONS ACCEPTED IN MARCH WILL ACTUALLY LEAVE BEFORE THE END OF THE MONTH. END COMMENT.

10. DURING MARCH, POST HAS REDOUBLED ATTEMPTS TO ENCOURAGE REFUGEE APPLICATIONS TO THIRD COUNTRIES. THERE ARE SIGNS THAT REFUGEE RESOLVE TO RESETTLE ONLY IN U.S. OR AUSTRALIA IS WAVERING A BIT. AS AN EXAMPLE, OUR UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA GRAD APPLIED TO, WAS ACCEPTED BY CANADA. THIS, AFTER PREVIOUSLY TELLING REF:OPS PERSONNEL HE WOULD ONLY CONSIDER THE U.S. HIS WIFE VETOED THEIR GOING, HOWEVER, "TOO COLD", SHE SAID. "WELL, HOW ABOUT AUSTRALIA, THEN?" REMARKED A RDF:OFF. SHE REPLIED THAT THEY WERE ONLY INTERESTED IN THE U.S. COMMENT: WE INTEND TO COMMENT ON THIS PARTICULAR CASE SEPARATELY. END COMMENT).

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